United Nations CRC/C/OPSC/GBR/CO/1*

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
8 July 2014

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the report submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under article 12, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography**

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CRC/C/OPSC/GBR/1) at its 1882nd and 1883rd meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1882 and 1883), held on 30 May 2014, and adopted at its 1901st meeting, held on 13 June 2014, the following concluding observations.

I. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report and its written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/OPSC/GBR/Q/1/Add.1). While the Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held with the State party's delegation, it regrets that the delegation did not include representatives from Northern Ireland and Scotland and that no information was provided on the Bailiwick of Jersey, to which the Optional Protocol has been recently extended.

3. The Committee reminds the State party that the present concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its concluding observations on the State party's third and fourth periodic reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/GBR/CO/4) and its initial report under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/GBR/CO/1), adopted in October 2008.

4. While noting that the State party extended its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the territory of the Bailiwick of Jersey in April 2014, the Committee is concerned that the Optional Protocol has not yet been extended to all other British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. The Committee recommends that the State party take all measures to extend the Optional Protocol to those territories and include information concerning the implementation of the Optional Protocol in them in its next periodic report under the Convention.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 11 July 2014.

** Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-sixth session (26 May–June 2014).

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II. General observations

Positive aspects

5. The Committee welcomes the various measures taken by the State party in areas relevant to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including:

(a) The adoption of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure in January 2011 and the Children's Rights Scheme in April 2014, placing legal duties on all the Ministers of the Welsh Government to give due regard to the rights and obligations set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols when exercising any of their functions;

(b) The adoption of the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2013, which specifically addresses a number of issues in relation to human trafficking;

(c) The adoption of the Human Transplantation (Wales) Act 2013 in July 2013, amendments to which afforded children the choice of appointing a representative to express consent to organ donation.

6. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's ratification of:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June 2009;

(b) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities in February 2009.

7. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved in the creation of institutions and the adoption of national plans and programmes that facilitate the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including:

(a) The establishment by the Home Office of a National Group on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People, which envisions launching a new national action plan in Autumn 2014;

(b) The guidance on investigating child sex offences published by the National Policing Lead for England and Wales.

8. The Committee further notes with appreciation that the State party issued a standing invitation to the United Nations special procedures in March 2001.

III. Data

Data collection

9. The Committee is seriously concerned that the State party has not established a comprehensive data collection system to enable the identification, recording, referral and follow-up at the national and local levels of all offences covered by the Optional Protocol and to analyse and assess progress in the implementation of the Optional Protocol. While noting the existence of the National Referral Mechanism, the Committee is concerned that the data which it collects are not disaggregated by region and are limited to cases of child trafficking, and that other offences covered by the Optional Protocol are not identified, recorded or followed up.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement a comprehensive and systematic mechanism of data collection, analysis, monitoring and impact assessment for all the areas covered by the Optional Protocol throughout its jurisdiction, including in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The data should be disaggregated by, inter alia, sex, age, national and ethnic origin, geographical location,**

and socioeconomic status, with particular attention to children in the most vulnerable situations. Data should also be collected on the number of child victims provided with recovery assistance and the number of prosecutions and convictions, disaggregated by the nature of the offence. The Committee also recommends that the State party coordinate data collection throughout its jurisdiction and establish a system of common indicators when collecting data for different regions.

IV. General measures of implementation

General principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Legislation

11. While noting the numerous laws adopted in relation to the Optional Protocol, particularly in England and Wales, the Committee is concerned that such efforts have focused almost exclusively on trafficking and that there is no comprehensive legislation that addresses all the offences covered by the Optional Protocol, such as the sale of children. The Committee is also concerned that the existing legislation has been developed separately, with a fragmented approach, in the State party's devolved administrations, resulting in inconsistencies in the application of the obligations under the Optional Protocol throughout its jurisdiction. The Committee is further concerned that certain offences listed under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for England and Wales and the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 cover children only under the age of 13 or 16 years while children between 16 and 18 years are left outside the ambit of those laws.

12. **The Committee strongly recommends that the State party ensure that all types of offences covered by the Optional Protocol, including the sale of children, child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography are covered under a comprehensive piece of legislation and that it ensure consistent application of all the obligations under the Optional Protocol throughout its jurisdiction, including in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The Committee specifically recommends that:**

(a) The definition of sale of children, which is similar but not identical to that of trafficking in persons, be amended in all national legislation of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in order to adequately implement the provision on sale of children contained in the Optional Protocol;

(b) The existing legislation, particularly the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and the proposed Modern Slavery Bill for England and Wales be amended and harmonized to ensure that all children under the age of 18 years of age are protected against all types of offences covered by the Optional Protocol.

National plan of action

13. While welcoming the existence of various plans of action in relation to the Optional Protocol, in particular the action plan on the work of the National Group on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People, the Human Trafficking Strategy and the proposed Modern Slavery Action Plan, the Committee is nevertheless concerned at the lack of a comprehensive plan and a unified national strategy to address all issues covered by the Optional Protocol.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop and adopt a unified, comprehensive and overarching national plan of action and a strategy for the**

implementation of the Optional Protocol throughout its jurisdiction, and that that national plan of action be provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources for its implementation. To that end, the State party should pay particular attention to the implementation of all the provisions of the Optional Protocol, taking into account the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the First, Second and Third World Congresses against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in 1996, in Yokohama, Japan, in 2001 and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2008.

Coordination and evaluation

15. The Committee is concerned about the lack of coordination between various governments, institutions and other bodies across the State party in dealing with cases of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In that regard, the Committee is concerned that the State party lacks a national mechanism for the overall coordination of the implementation and evaluation of activities under the Optional Protocol. The Committee also notes with concern the complex lines of accountability and coordination for the implementation of the Optional Protocol in England and Wales, with the Home Office retaining control over the anti-trafficking strategy, and the Department for Education and local governments holding responsibility for the care and support of child victims, including trafficked children, which results in differences in focus and approach in handling cases of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party designate a unit with high-level authority and the capacity to provide leadership and effective general oversight for the monitoring and evaluation of activities under the Optional Protocol across sectoral ministries and from the central to local levels of government, and provide it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to function effectively. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure better coordination among the various governments across the four jurisdictions while developing and implementing legislation and policies for the implementation of the Optional Protocol, to ensure consistency in their approach.**

Independent monitoring

17. The Committee notes the proposal in the draft modern slavery bill to establish an anti-slavery commissioner. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that the Commissioner may not be provided with sufficient resources, a robust mandate or statutory independence to fulfil the role effectively.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the proposed Anti-Slavery Commissioner is provided with sufficient resources and a robust mandate and is fully independent, in order to effectively fulfil the role and ensure the protection of children's rights under the Optional Protocol. The Committee further recommends that the State party include a provision in the draft modern slavery bill which would allow the Anti-Slavery Commissioner to report directly to the relevant parliaments.**

Dissemination and awareness-raising

19. The Committee notes that the governments in the State party have partnered with various groups to produce and disseminate public information about child sexual exploitation and trafficking. It also notes that the State party has launched public awareness campaigns, such as "This is Abuse", which is aimed at preventing children from becoming victims and perpetrators of abuse. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that such efforts do not focus on all the offences and issues covered by the Optional Protocol, such as

the sale of children in the context of the transfer of organs, their engagement in forced labour or for the purposes of adoption. It is also concerned that the State party lacks a systematic and comprehensive approach to the dissemination of the Optional Protocol, which has contributed to a low level of understanding and awareness of the Optional Protocol among government agencies, the police, the judiciary, the public, children themselves and professional groups working with children.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party step up its efforts to make the provisions of the Optional Protocol widely known to the public at large, including to children, in a child-friendly manner, their families and communities. The Committee also urges the State party:**

(a) To systematically incorporate issues related to the Optional Protocol into the curricula of primary and secondary schools;

(b) To develop, in close cooperation with civil society organizations, the media, the private sector, communities and children, awareness-raising programmes including campaigns on issues covered by the Optional Protocol. The programmes should be made available in all jurisdictions of the State party and in forms that are accessible to children.

Training

21. The Committee appreciates the various training activities concerning the sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking, including those delivered through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, for professionals working with children. The Committee also notes that, in Scotland, the Child Protection Committees ensure that the training needs of all staff involved in child protection are met. However, the Committee is concerned that efforts to provide multidisciplinary training to professionals working with and for children are neither systematic nor adequate, and that such training does not extend to all areas covered by the Optional Protocol and does not reach the front-line professionals working with children, in particular health-care professionals and local police officials. The Committee is also concerned that resources to meet the cost of training on issues covered by the Optional Protocol are not adequate in the State party.

22. **The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its multidisciplinary training on the Optional Protocol, especially for members of the police, health professionals, judges, prosecutors and social workers at all levels of the governments in the State party. The Committee further urges the State party to earmark the necessary resources to conduct such training and systematically plan and evaluate its impact.**

Allocation of resources

23. The Committee regrets the lack of clearly identifiable budget allocations assigned to activities designated to implement the Optional Protocol, in particular with regard to the prevention of offences and the provision of assistance to child victims.

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all possible measures to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated equitably throughout the State party for the implementation of all areas covered by the Optional Protocol, by providing, in particular, the necessary human, technical and financial resources for the development and implementation of programmes aimed at prevention and at the protection, physical and psychological recovery and social integration of victims, as well as the investigation and prosecution of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol. The Committee also recommends that the State party provide information about the steps taken in this area in its next periodic report under the Convention.**

V. Prevention of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (art. 9, paras. 1 and 2)

Measures adopted to prevent offences prohibited under the Protocol

25. The Committee notes as positive the number of reforms made by the State party, following the Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, to prevent child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups in England and Wales. The Committee also notes the work of the National Crime Agency (NCA) and, specifically, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), which comes under NCA, to help identify the main risks to children and prevent them from becoming victims of sexual exploitation. However, the Committee is strongly concerned that, in the absence of a legislative consent motion, NCA does not have powers in the devolved sphere in Northern Ireland and therefore CEOP, which is part of NCA, is not fully operational in Northern Ireland. The Committee is further concerned about:

(a) The fact that the State party has closed 76 Sure Start children's centres, which provide instrumental support to children and their families in vulnerable situations and help to deal with the underlying causes of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, such as poverty;

(b) Insufficient measures to address potential abusers of children;

(c) The low number of prosecutions and convictions of individuals who commit crimes under the Optional Protocol;

(d) The lack of a clear multi-agency system to identify and respond to children who are at particular risk of being victims of the offences, such as children reported missing, those forcibly trafficked within the State party, or children in institutions, especially in Northern Ireland;

(e) The fact that, despite statutory guidance stating that "bed and breakfast" type of accommodation is not suitable for unaccompanied migrant children, asylum-seeking children or trafficked children, who are vulnerable to exploitation, they continue to be housed in such accommodation.

26. **The Committee urges the State party to continue its efforts to provide effective protection to children in vulnerable situations from all forms of exploitation, and ensure effective local collaboration, strategic planning and training to implement the programme of reforms initiated in England and Wales. The Committee also urges the State party to establish safeguards to ensure that devolution does not lead to discrimination in the enjoyment of rights by children in different regions and that mechanisms such as the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre are extended to Northern Ireland, to ensure the full implementation of the Optional Protocol throughout the State party's jurisdiction. The Committee specifically recommends that the State party:**

(a) Immediately stop any further closures of Sure Start children's centres and take all necessary measures to increase the budget and provide adequate resources for accessible and high-quality services in those centres;

(b) Put in place measures tailored to target potential abusers of children;

(c) Provide more resources and systematic training on investigations for law enforcement agencies, to improve prosecution and conviction rates for crimes covered by the Optional Protocol;

(d) Develop prevention programmes targeting children in the most vulnerable situations, such as children in street situations, children in contact with or linked to gang members or groups (particularly in England), irregular migrant children and children living in residential institutions. Particular attention should be given to preventing them from becoming victims of physical and sexual abuse;

(e) Ensure that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, irregular migrant children and child victims of trafficking are entitled to special protection and care and that they are provided with safe and adequate accommodation. The State party should also ensure that care arrangements made for such children are regularly supervised and assessed by qualified persons to ensure the child's physical and psychosocial health, and protection against violence or exploitation.

VI. Prohibition of the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution and related matters (arts. 3; 4, paras. 2 and 3; 5; 6 and 7)

Existing criminal or penal laws and regulations

27. The Committee is concerned that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, applicable in England and Wales, and the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, for certain grave offences of sexual exploitation of children between 13 and 16 years of age, such as meeting a child following sexual grooming, engaging in sexual activity with a child, arranging or facilitating a child sex offence, the defendant may claim that he/she believed the victim to be above 16 years. The Committee is also concerned that it is then for the prosecution to prove that the defendant "did not reasonably believe" this, with the risk of further cross-examinations of child victims and their consequent re-victimization.

28. While the Committee notes as positive the State party's current effort to introduce a Modern Slavery Bill in England and Wales to consolidate the existing provisions in relation to trafficking, and to develop separate legislation to combat human trafficking in Scotland, it is seriously concerned that those efforts focus almost exclusively on trafficking and do not cover all the offences covered by the Optional Protocol. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) The draft modern slavery bill (the bill) lacks a legislative focus on children and does not define certain types of crime, such as forced labour or the transfer of organs of a child for profit, as sale of children in accordance with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol;

(b) The bill does not currently take into account or address any of the particular vulnerabilities or needs of child victims.

29. **The Committee reminds the State party that, under the Optional Protocol, the term "child" applies to all persons under the age of 18 years and therefore urges the State party to revise its legislation to ensure that all children up to 18 years of age are protected from all types of offence covered by the Optional Protocol. Furthermore, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) To ensure that, in the rebuttable presumptions in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it includes a provision that, for child victims, the burden of proof will be reversed;

(b) To thoroughly review the draft modern slavery bill to ensure that it includes all the types of crime defined in articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol, such as forced labour, transfer of organs of a child for profit, adoption of a child for

profit and the sale of children, and addresses the particular vulnerabilities and needs of child victims.

Child trafficking

30. The Committee is strongly concerned that thousands of children continue to be trafficked every year in the State party, particularly for sexual exploitation and labour, and it expresses its deepest concern about reports that hundreds of children have been abducted from their families in Africa and trafficked to the State party for brutal religious rituals, such as the so-called voodoo and juju rituals. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) The number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators of trafficking and other offences covered by the Optional Protocol is extremely low across the State party, leading to impunity for perpetrators; and that the prosecutors often choose to charge perpetrators of human trafficking with other offences, such as rape or abduction, in order to secure convictions;

(b) Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, a non-national who arranges the trafficking of a child outside the jurisdiction of the State party is committing a crime in England and Wales; however the Act does not extend to Northern Ireland.

31. **The Committee urges the State party to strengthen the capacity of law-enforcement authorities and the judiciary to detect and prosecute the trafficking of children for labour, sexual and other forms of exploitation, including for religious rituals. The Committee further recommends that the State party enact specific legislation on child trafficking in accordance with the Optional Protocol and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) and ensure that the crime of child trafficking is defined consistently and prosecuted throughout the State party.**

Child sex tourism

32. The Committee is deeply concerned that the State party's citizens, including some convicted sex offenders who have set up children's orphanages and charities in other countries, travel and sexually abuse children abroad. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the findings of the recent review of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (the Davies Report), commissioned by the Association of Chief Police Officers, that the State party's law and extrajurisdictional policing arrangements fail both to prevent British sex offenders from travelling abroad and to prosecute them when they commit offences abroad, putting children at risk of exploitation and abuse by British tourists.

33. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) To urgently implement the recommendations of the Davies Report and review its legislation, including the Sexual Offences Act 2003, to prevent sexual exploitation of children abroad by British sex offenders;

(b) To establish a single specialized police unit directed at extraterritorial sexual offending against children to investigate such offences; and provide adequate training and resources to investigate and prosecute such offences;

(c) To take all necessary measures, legal and institutional, to strengthen the identification, investigation and prosecution of nationals of the State party involved in the sexual exploitation of children abroad, and take all necessary measures to restrict the movements of convicted or alleged child sex abusers and/or prevent them from leaving the State party, including by imposing stricter travel bans;

(d) To conduct advocacy with the tourism industry on the harmful effects of child sex tourism, widely disseminate the World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to travel agents and tourism agencies, and encourage them to become signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and to report publicly on their efforts to prevent child sex tourism.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction

34. The Committee is concerned that the State party's legislation in England and Wales does not establish extraterritorial jurisdiction for all the offences referred to in article 4, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol. The Committee is also concerned that the application of extraterritorial jurisdiction in the State party is subject to the requirement of dual criminality.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to ensure that domestic legislation throughout the State party, including in its devolved administrations, enables it to establish and exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction, without the dual criminality criterion, over all the offences covered by the Optional Protocol.**

Extradition

36. The Committee notes as positive that in cases where there is no other treaty basis for extradition, section 193 of the Extradition Act 2003 provides the framework for the United Kingdom to have extradition relations with parties to international conventions of which the State party is also a signatory. It is concerned, however, that the principle of dual criminality must be satisfied before extradition can be considered. The Committee also notes with concern that, in Scotland, section 55 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 and section 46 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 lack legal provisions for the extradition of individuals in circumstances where the victim is a British national but the offence is committed outside Scotland.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party withdraw the dual criminality requirement for extradition for all crimes covered by the Optional Protocol. The Committee also recommends that the State party invoke the Optional Protocol as a legal basis for extradition, including in Scotland, even where there is no bilateral agreement.**

VII. Protection of the rights of child victims (arts. 8 and 9, paras. 3 and 4)

Measures adopted to protect the rights and interests of child victims of offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

38. The Committee notes as positive the information provided by the State party that it is reviewing the process of identification and support for child victims, particularly the National Referral Mechanism, and that it has recently established, on a trial basis, a system of personal advocates for child victims of trafficking. The Committee also notes that the State party has taken a victim-centred approach to its draft modern slavery bill and introduced a statutory defence to allow for the non-prosecution of victims under the bill. However, the Committee is concerned:

(a) About the treatment of child victims of offences covered by the Optional Protocol in the State party's criminal justice system and that child victims, particularly

child victims of trafficking, have been arrested and charged with a range of offences, including causing or inciting/controlling prostitution for gain, keeping a brothel, theft and cultivation of cannabis plants;

(b) At the lack of a nationwide and multi-agency approach to identifying children at risk or child victims of offences covered by the Optional Protocol, especially children at ports, who generally come into contact with immigration officers who are not adequately trained on the identification of child victims;

(c) At the fact that child victims are not entitled to access, free of charge, to a qualified legal representative and that the State party does not appoint independent guardians for all child victims of offences covered by the Optional Protocol, including victims of trafficking;

(d) At the fact that the entry clearance process (including in family reunification cases) does not include an assessment of the best interests of the child, and that there is an absence of statutory guidance on age assessments, with practitioners having to rely on case law and expert opinions, leading to variations in the quality of, and inconsistencies in, the methods used to assess age;

(e) About the various practical and legal obstacles that child victims, including trafficked children, face in relation to receiving compensation in their respective jurisdictions.

39. **In the light of article 9, paragraph 3, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee recommends that the State party provide child victims of offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol with adequate free legal aid and psychological, medical and social support. The Committee specifically recommends that the State party:**

(a) Establish mechanisms and procedures to protect the rights of child victims of offences covered by the Optional Protocol, including establishing a clear obligation of non-prosecution in the criminal justice system, and ensure that they are treated as victims rather than criminals by the law enforcement and judicial authorities;

(b) Establish a nationwide system to ensure a clear and comprehensive assessment of the identity of child victims, including for child victims of trafficking and at major ports as planned by the State Party, in a friendly, safe atmosphere by qualified professionals trained in gender- and age-sensitive interviewing techniques;

(c) Prioritize the appointment of a competent and statutory guardian as expeditiously as possible to safeguard the best interests of the child during the criminal justice process and ensure that a child victim is referred to asylum-seeking or other procedures only after the appointment of a guardian and that they are entitled to access, free of charge, to a qualified legal representative;

(d) Ensure that the entry clearance process (including in family reunification cases) for child victims of trafficking includes an assessment of the best interests of the child with a view to protecting the rights and interest of child victims and that statutory guidance on age assessments is adopted to ensure consistencies in the methods for assessing age and that such assessment is conducted in a scientific, safe, child- and gender-sensitive, and fair manner;

(e) Ensure that all jurisdictions, including Northern Ireland and Scotland, facilitate and guarantee access to compensation to child victims for violations of their rights, including through the provision of systematic information on their right to receive compensation.

VIII. Recovery and reintegration of victims

40. The Committee notes as positive that, in Scotland, under section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act, local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. The Committee also notes as positive that the State party has piloted multisystemic therapy for child victims of abuse in England and Wales and that, under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2006) (the Victims' Code), victims of crime are legally entitled to minimum standards of support. However, the Committee is concerned that the Victims' Code guarantees few entitlements with regard to health, social and psychological support to child victims and that the existing psychological support services for child victims are inadequate and vary across the State party. The Committee is also concerned that the Code of Practice and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which contain additional measures to strengthen service provisions for children in vulnerable situations, do not extend to Northern Ireland.

41. **The Committee urges the State party to adopt comprehensive measures throughout its jurisdiction for the recovery and reintegration of child victims of all offences covered by the Optional Protocol, including their full social reintegration and physical, psychological and psychosocial recovery. The Committee recommends in particular that the State party:**

(a) Allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to increase access to child-centred services for child victims of offences covered by the Optional Protocol and continue to develop specialized medical, psychosocial and psychological care services, including by providing access to child mental health professionals and psychological support services throughout the jurisdiction of the State party, where necessary;

(b) Adopt clear measures to guide the rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of trafficking, prostitution and pornography, including clear procedures for special assistance and repatriation for foreign child victims based on the "best interests determination" and follow-up;

(c) Seek technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the implementation of these recommendations.

IX. International assistance and cooperation (art. 10)

Multilateral, bilateral and regional agreements

42. **In the light of article 10, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee encourages the State party to continue to strengthen international cooperation through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements, especially with neighbouring countries, including by strengthening procedures for, and mechanisms to coordinate, the implementation of such arrangements, with a view to improving prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for any of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol.**

X. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.**

XI. Follow-up and dissemination

Follow-up

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure full implementation of the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations, inter alia, by transmitting them to the relevant government ministries, the Parliament, and to national and local authorities, for appropriate consideration and further action.**

Dissemination of concluding observations

45. **The Committee recommends that the report and written replies submitted by the State party and related recommendations (concluding observations) adopted by it be made widely available, including, but not exclusively, through the Internet to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Optional Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.**

XII. Next report

46. **In accordance with article 12, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Protocol in its next periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with article 44 of the Convention.**